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words, Israel was as much of a racial "melting-pot" as many other nations have been. Dr. Smith, of course, knows this fact *per se*; but he makes no use of it as a background for his admirable exposition. The other Semitic peoples may have included primitive clans which also disliked cities and had a horror of great buildings; but no Semitic nation except Israel has sent down through the ages a collection of poetry and prose in which the primitive nomadic element is arrayed persistently over against the dark background of capitalistic civilization. If Dr. Smith will address himself to this phase of the subject, it can hardly be doubted that we shall have a still more valuable exposition of the social origin of Israelite poetry.

**Religion as Life.** By Henry Churchill King.  
New York: Macmillan, 1913. Pp. 194.  
\$1.00.

In this volume the president of Oberlin College gives an inspirational treatment of religion from the newer angles of approach. The question that chiefly concerns the soul in earnest pursuit of life, he says, is this: Am I willing to face the facts of life, or am I ignoring them—the great common, essential, human facts? And he points out that a faith essentially religious underlies all our reasoning, all work worth doing, all strenuous moral endeavor, and all earnest social service. The treatment of this theme is divided into six chapters: "The Choice of Life"; "The Method of Life"; "The Realities of Life"; "The Sources of Life"; "The Enemies of Life"; "The Essence of Life." Ministers will find much first-rate homiletical suggestion in Dr. King's book; and thoughtful persons who are consciously facing the underlying facts of life will get much instruction and stimulus from these pages.

**The Church and the Labor Conflict.** By Parley P. Womer. New York: Macmillan, 1913.  
Pp. xii+302. \$1.50.

This is one of the sanest and best instructed books called forth by the great social awakening now sweeping through the churches. The author is a Congregational minister in St. Paul. He shows an insight into social and religious conditions which is out of the common; and he gives evidence of an acquaintance with economic and sociological research to which few clergymen can lay claim. To say this, however, is not to criticize the clergy, but merely to point out that most of the recent literature dealing with the social mission of the church reflects an impractical element in the traditional conception of religion; and as the author of the book before us frankly says, one criticism that must be passed upon nearly all of this literature is its lack of definiteness and its failure to grapple

satisfactorily with the particular and fundamental facts of our contemporary social and economic development.

The significance of Mr. Womer's book lies, not in any startling or novel thesis, calculated to enlighten the expert, but in its practical and sane grip on facts traditionally supposed to lie outside the domain of church and clergy, and in its adjustment of these facts with the claims of religion. The author's aim is to give concreteness to the current discussions of the social mission of the church. While the book is not an epoch-maker, it is a worthy and scholarly sign of the new epoch into which the church is now pressing. No minister or thoughtful layman who is looking for light on the social problem as related to religion can fail to receive much benefit from a careful study of its contents.

**Our Own Religion in Ancient Persia.** Being Lectures Delivered in Oxford Presenting the Zend Avesta as Collated with the pre-Christian Exilic Pharisaism, Advancing the Persian Question to the Foremost Position in our Biblical Research. By Lawrence Mills. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1913. Pp. xii+193.

Dr. Mills, professor of Zend philology in the University of Oxford, is one of the leading authorities on Persia's literature and religion. This book is a collection of somewhat heterogeneous materials some of which bear upon the question of the relation of Zoroastrianism to Judaism and Christianity. This is one of the moot questions in the field of biblical interpretation. For example, the Jews were under the political domination of Persia from 538 B.C. to 333 B.C. The Persians had a well-developed idea of immortality. Prior to 538 B.C. this idea did not appear among the Hebrews. In the later post-exilic age, the Jews took hold of the idea and made good use of it. Did they get it from the Persian religion? To this and other important points of contact, Dr. Mills calls attention in a forceful fashion. The book is suggestive and interesting, but too disjointed and fragmentary to be as intelligible as is desirable in a work intended for the general public.

**The Country Church. The Decline of Its Influence and the Remedy.** By Charles Otis Gill and Gifford Pinchot. New York: Macmillan, 1913. Pp. xii+222. \$1.25.

This treatise, published under the authority of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, is an important book. Its chief burden, from beginning to end, is the search for actual, tested *facts*. Is the country church growing in size and power, or declining? Is it

doing the work which belongs to it? Is it as influential an agent for the improvement of country life as it should be, and if it is not, how can it recover the position it once held? It does not give us mere theories, opinions, and guesses about these questions, but plain facts, as learned from careful investigation into a selected series of country communities with a population aggregating fifty thousand.

The book reaches the conclusion that the decline of the country church is due to the decline of the community in which the church is located. From this, it deduces that the up-building and improvement of country life in general is the main hope for the regeneration of country churches. This position is one that would hardly have been taken by a religious investigator ten or fifteen years ago, because it is opposed to that individualistic emphasis which, until recently, was overwhelming in the religious field. A few years ago, rural church decline would have been charged up to the "sins of the individual." But now the decline of the country church is frankly recognized as a community movement, bound up with the whole problem of contemporary society. This volume ought to be in the hands of all who are trying to interpret and cope with the difficulties of the country church.

#### **A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament.**

By George Buchanan Gray. New York: Scribner, 1913. Pp. xi+253. 75 cents.

By his long training and through his large experience as a writer on Old Testament themes, Professor Gray is peculiarly qualified for the task of preparing a handbook of this kind. The book may be unhesitatingly recommended for the use of ministers, theological students, and laymen who wish to know the conclusions of reverent modern scholarship in regard to the older portion of our Bible. It has something of importance and clarity to say about most of the questions pertaining to Old Testament introduction. While the professional teacher will find nothing new here, the volume will be a fresh and welcome help in the work of guiding students through this field of study.

#### **Mind and Health, with an Examination of Some Systems of Divine Healing.**

By Edward C. Weaver. New York: Macmillan, 1913. Pp. xv+500. \$2.00.

This is an eminently sane book. It is sane because it is genuinely scientific. It is scientific because it takes fully and sympathetically into account all the facts of all the sides that can possibly enter into the discussion. It passed muster as a Doctor's thesis at Clark University, and the introduction is by President Hall. The different religious systems that are examined will

respect the author, because they will recognize that he has made an effort to be fair—a recognition that far too often is not deserved.

That anyone would agree with everything in any book is not to be expected. We wish that this book might be extensively read by ministers—and so that it might displace the worthless trash that is so widely distributed and read.

#### **Mishnah. A Digest of the Basic Principle of the Early Jewish Jurisprudence. Baba Meziah Translated and Annotated.**

By H. E. Goldin. New York: Putnam, 1913. Pp. viii+205. \$1.50.

Baba Meziah is one of the treatises of the Mishnah. The treatise deals with "the acquisition and transfer of title to personal property." Mr. Goldin has translated and commented upon the entire treatise. The work is well done and the book will prove very serviceable to students of Jewish law and custom. As the first of a series of volumes of the same sort upon the Mishnah, it assures its successors of a cordial welcome.

Another characteristic pamphlet comes to us from the pen of Dr. Frank Crane, entitled *God and Democracy* (Forbes & Co., 50 cents). Its main point is its emphasis upon the conception of God as that of the Universal Servant and not that of the Universal Ruler. The church, says Dr. Crane, is losing its hold on modern life in proportion as it clings to the old Czar-idea of God, which does not appeal to the higher type of modern conviction; and he seeks to show how the idea of democracy is altering the idea of God. The little book is a pungent, arresting statement, which ought to do good service.

There is no small amount of good sense and effective style in the series of little addresses given by A. H. Strong, President Emeritus of the Rochester Theological Seminary. The addresses are being made up from stenographic reports, made quite without his knowledge, of talks which he gave at the daily noon prayer meeting of the seminary. In the nature of the case they are not discussions, but they are brief exposures of a rich experience and are eminently sane, catholic, and mature.

The title of the book, *One Hundred Chapel Talks to Theological Students*, should not prevent any active mind from reading it. (Griffith & Rowland Press, \$1.00).

The Macmillan Company have issued a fifty-cent edition of Mathews' *The Church and the Changing Order*, as an addition to the "Macmillan Standard Library."